



**Washington State Public Health Laboratory
Risk and Safety Assessment
Stakeholder Group Meeting Report
December 4, 2008**

Overview

This was the sixth and final meeting of the Public Health Laboratories' (PHL) Stakeholder Group. The group was recruited by the PHL to assist with a risk and safety assessment. The Stakeholder Group participated in the selection of a consultant to perform that assessment, and provided advice to the PHL throughout the assessment process.

At this meeting, the Stakeholder Group heard from Department of Health staff about the final *Risk and Safety Assessment Report*. The Group also provided their recommendations on the best way to ensure successful communication, over the long-term, with the Shoreline community.

Attendees

Stakeholder Group Members

Ray Allshouse, *City of Shoreline*
Bill Bear, *Briarcrest Neighborhood Association*
Jeff Flesner, *Fircrest School*
Jim Hardman, *Friends of Fircrest*
Scott Keeny, *Shoreline Fire Department*
Gail Marsh, *City of Shoreline*
Dick Nicholson, *Ridgecrest Neighborhood Association*
Vince Santo Pietro, *Shoreline School District*

Staff and Consultants

Romesh Gautam, *Public Health Laboratory, Laboratory Director*
Lain Knowles, *Public Health Laboratory, Assistant Director*
Jude Van Buren, *Department of Health, Assistant Secretary of Health*
Jim Robertson, *Chief Administrator for Epidemiology, Department of Health*
Margaret Norton-Arnold, *Facilitator*
Amanda Sparr, *Administrative Support*

Introduction and Overview

Group members shared information about upcoming events:

The Shoreline City Council has asked for a presentation about the risk and safety assessment, and also wants to hear from the Stakeholder Group about the assessment process. The Group determined that the February 2, 2009 Study Session with the Council worked best for their schedules. Scott Dwyer will also attend the session and will present the results of the assessment.

Vince was invited by the Shoreline School Board to discuss his experience serving on the Stakeholder Group.

Scott will report on the risk assessment process to the Shoreline Fire Department's Board of Commissioners.

Lain reported that the Public Health Laboratory has recently been working with the FDA on laboratory procedures to test foods such as baby formula for melamine contamination. This has been in the news recently relating to food imported from China.

Gail provided members with information about an emergency preparedness conference scheduled for April in Tacoma.

Dick noted that he will be part of a December 9 meeting of the Shoreline Economic Development Advisory Committee, and will be discussing the future potential for the Fircrest Campus with that group.

Update from DOH

The Department of Health is submitting the *Risk and Safety Assessment Report* to the Washington State Legislature this month, along with a letter requesting funding to implement the recommendations from the assessment. The Department will continue to stay in touch with the Stakeholder Group to keep members up to date on progress with the Legislature. Members volunteered to testify at Legislative committees, should it be necessary to do so.

Design for the proposed laboratory expansion project is now 95% complete, and the required documents for permitting will be submitted to the City of Shoreline in January 2009. The request for construction bids will be issued in March-April 2009.

Ongoing Community Outreach

The Stakeholder Group discussed a number of ideas related to continued public outreach from the Public Health Laboratory, and offered the following recommendations:

1) Hire a part-time Public Information Officer (PIO). This individual could coordinate with other PIO functions in the City (e.g. Fire and Police). This staff member could also provide outreach and coordination with all of the neighborhood associations and other organized groups in Shoreline.

- 2) Continue with the Stakeholder Group as a “Community Liaison Panel.” The panel should meet 3-4 times a year, and those meeting dates should be established in advance. Current members of the panel are generally willing to continue serving on the panel, and that panel might be expanded to include representatives from North Seattle and Lake Forest park neighborhoods.
- 3) Offer an annual open house/tour of the laboratory, and offer other tours as requested on an appointment basis.
- 4) Continue with the development of a curriculum program for high school students; the laboratory can provide a unique, hands-on experience for these students.
- 5) It is good to offer ongoing presentations to the neighborhood associations, but it would be more effective to offer a “menu” of presentations to these groups, so they can pick and choose among the topics of most interest to them. In addition to just describing the work of the PHL, for example, speakers could provide public education on health issues and emerging concerns such as West Nile Virus.
- 6) An e-newsletter is more effective than a printed newsletter, which is likely to be thrown away if just mailed to a list of addresses. However, a few printed copies could be made available at public locations such as libraries, schools, the Shoreline Center, and Third Place Books. Printing should be low-cost in consideration of these tight economic times.
- 7) The PHL website should be regularly updated and maintained, as it can be a valuable public education tool. Contact the media when a particular health issue arises, such as West Nile Virus, to draw media attention to the site.
- 8) The Public Health Laboratory should be visible at Celebrate Shoreline on an annual basis.
- 9) Take advantage of the City’s public television station, Channel 26. This is a good place to provide regular updates on Laboratory activities.

Public Comment

Bill Anderson, Friends of Fircrest, suggested that, as the Community Liaison Panel continues, a representative from the group developing the Fircrest Master Plan should be included as part of the process. Lain agreed with Bill’s suggestion, and further noted that he will continue to encourage collaboration between DSHS and the Department of Health in relation to the longer-term planning for these two state agencies on the Fircrest Campus.

Next Steps

The stakeholder group will discuss the risk assessment process with the Shoreline City Council on Monday, February 2, 2009.